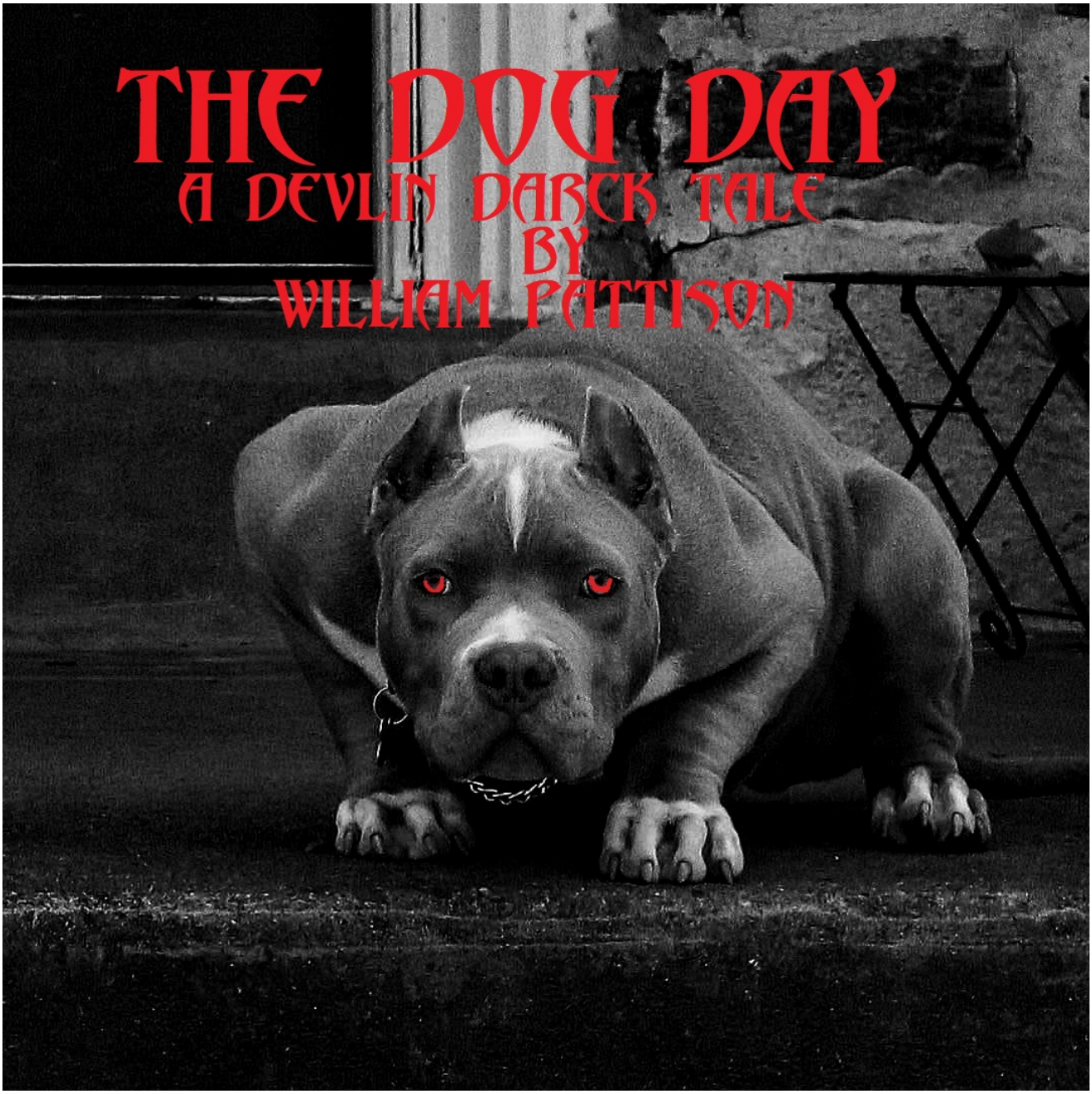

THE DOG DAY
A DEVLIN DARCK TALE
BY
WILLIAM PATTISON

Introduction

Welcome to the first story featuring my new character Devlin Darck, God's chosen demon fighter.

Now I know you are going to wonder why I chose to introduce Devlin at this point in his time as a demon fighter? Why not simply do an origin story? Well, people have gotten really tired of characters being introduced in origin stories. Think about all the times we've seen a new version of Batman or Superman's background story. Think about how many times we've had to slog through origin stories. Boring!

I wanted to introduce this character later because then I can intrigue you and let you get to meet him while sprinkling bits of his background and situation without bogging the story with a huge background reveal. I want you to get to know Devlin like you would a friend. Same with the other main characters in this story. I want you to experience Devlin's story like a puzzle, much like they did with John Cramer in SAW. With John Cramer each installment gave you more and more details of who he was and it made a strong connection between character and audience. That is my goal when it comes to Devlin Darck.

So, let me introduce you to Devlin Darck and his quest to cleans his soul …

THE DOG DAY

A DEVLIN DARCK TALE

BY

WILLIAM PATTISON

Dedicated to Allan Moore who created my favorite supernatural ass kicker John Constantine and Ethan Reiff and Cyrus Voris who created the TV series Brimstone as well as to Boo Rhoads and her dog Navi, who inspired this story…

Even God's chosen demon fighter once in a while gets time off. Unfortunately, in this case, it came with my dear brother, and driver, Damon, getting the crap kicked out of him by five white supremacist, Mohawk wearing, assholes. Their political views were obvious by the Neo-Nazi tattoos that covered their arms and necks. Why did they fuck poor Damon up, you ask? They had issues with Damon's choice of sex partners and thought some gay bashing would be a riot. I had other ideas.

Being the big brother, I intervened, of course. It was the only reason Damon survived. I managed to fuck up the assholes pretty good, but it was nothing compared to the damage they inflicted upon my poor brother.

Anyway, he ended up in the hospital with casts on both his arms and legs. Also, he was drinking out of a straw since the rotten fucks broke his jaw as well. The poor bugger looked a real mess. Thank God that The Catholic Church was paying the bills. That was actually the amusing part of the situation, given their long standing views on gay people. It's actually nice to have an open minded pope for once.

So, I found myself stuck in a rather quaint…not…little Bible belt town, which was laughably called Hope, until dear brother was recovered enough to drive us the hell out. If I could I'd have driven us both out once he was out of the hospital, but neither one of us wanted to risk having me behind the wheel. Oh no, that would be a definite traffic accident waiting to happen. Driving and I don't mix.

I managed to find myself an affordable one room apartment, with what could roughly be described as having a functioning kitchen and workable bathroom, at the Imperial Palace Apartments. Unlike its palatial name, this 'luxury' lodging was an old, worn looking, brick building in the middle of the ghetto part of town. God bless you, Arch Bishop Cramer. I never said the church was particularly generous when it came to food and lodgings for their warriors in the battle against Hell. For the most part it was creaky, lumpy, beds and dollar menus meals. Fuck, both of our birthday cakes were in fact gas station cupcakes. Happy birthday to us.

What can I say is with most jobs it's the perks that count in the end. Not with this job. Of course, I had to realize that I needed a bit of suffering to help cleans my eternal soul after the tragic events eighteen years ago at La Rue house. Really can't ever forget that.

One real advantage of the situation was that my annoying guardian angel, Vernon, kept a rather low profile during this time. What a blessing.

Of course, he did make a short appearance to put in his two cents after I got here. It was a couple of days after I arrived when I was numbing myself at Amy's Bar, which was conveniently at the end of the block near where I was staying. The winged mood killer showed up beside me and startled the shit out of me.

"Shouldn't you be with your brother?" The bald headed bean pole in the white suit and tie asked in his usual monotone. "Giving him moral support or whatever you humans do in situations like this." Like he gave a flying fuck.

I let out a frustrated sigh. "All I would be doing is sitting around being bored and watching TV because they got him so drugged up he wouldn't even know I was there. I'd rather get myself medicated here instead." I downed my shot and motioned to the, muscular, tattooed, dark haired, Goth lady bartender for a refill. She came over and refilled my shot glass without questioning me about talking to myself given that Vernon was visible only to me. But, I figured 'Amy' had probably seen everything, given her career choice, and could give a shit. The smirk on her black lips spoke volumes.

"Don't you have something better to do then bug me?" I asked Vernon, releasing another sigh. "After all with Damon down we're off the clock. Why don't you go find yourself a nice sexy emotionless lady angel with a matching stick up her backside and do some cloud seeding or whatever you angels do for fun?"

"Angels don't have fun." He told me with a bland look on his face.

"Knowing you as long as I have, I have no doubt about that." I admitted before downing my shot yet again.

"And, human, we are never off the clock because the adversary never is. I suggest you remain observant and on guard at all times. Evil can appear anywhere and at any time."

With that Vernon disappeared and I motioned to my Goth angel for another refill.

I was so thankful to be rid of him.

Amusingly the spirit of my former girlfriend Carol, who was stuck being my spiritual guide and representative of the trapped spirits of the paranormal team I massacred while demon possessed, would periodically show up to check up on me. Most of the time this would occur when I was sitting at the bar in the middle of one of my drinking sessions, which was a daily thing. She would just stare at me with disapproval, shake her head, and thankfully simply slowly fade away. I didn't need her lecturing me as well as Vernon.

A couple of times when she would do this I had the urge to go off on her and remind her in no uncertain terms it wasn't my fault we were stuck in this junk heap of a town, but I knew that doing this would only make me look like a complete nutcase to the other drunks that filled the bar. But honestly, from the quality of the regulars I doubt they'd even notice. Still I remained silent. I didn't want to get Carol anymore pissed at me than she already was. I believe I kind of owe it to her because after all she died by hanging herself because the demon possessing me convinced her that he would release me if she sacrificed herself. Unfortunately, she had forgotten that you never make deals with demons because they never keep their word. Thankfully, her death gave me the strength to kick the demon out of my body on my own. But that is another story for another time.

To my surprise while having one of my drinking binges I happened to run into a couple of sort of buddies I knew from my college days. Wayne and Greg were like two extremes when it came to rejects from the social groups from college.

Wayne had been, in fact, my number one drug connection in college. He was a long dark haired, bearded, dude who wore the same leather vest with band pins he wore in college. Amusingly he was still a drug dealer, but now he had himself a nice flower child girlfriend, Hope, and a very disturbing male spawn he named Angus after the guy from AC,DC. When I say this kid was disturbing I mean disturbing.

Wayne's kid loved to sit and stare at people intently with those empty, soulless, eyes he had…Oh, yeah, that red haired, freckled faced, nightmare loved to make me uncomfortable. Seriously, this kid royally disturbed the hell out of me, and I fight demons for a living. If there was ever a kid that was a potential son of Satan this was the one. Of course because of my longtime friendship with Wayne I had to keep my mouth shut about the situation and tolerate it. Isn't friendship grand?

Greg on the other hand was on the opposite end of the weird loser spectrum. He was a three hundred pound, balding, guy with heavy black rimmed glasses and a love of either orange or red sweaters, even during summer. To put it simply the tubby bastard was the human equivalent of Winnie the Pooh. He even had a habit of saying "Bother" on occasion like the fat, orange, teddy bear. He was a mama's boy who currently lived with his old mother and took care of her. He'd actually had to leave college before getting his degree when her health failed her. Supposedly, his mom started having attacks and would pass out. So, in the end, he was stuck being her servant, even twenty-five years later. The poor asshole.

Greg's leaving college was no loss to the female population at Blackwood College because they didn't have to deal with Greg and his constant trying to pick up any skirt within arm's reach. Amusingly, even the unattractive ones were not immune to Greg's attention. The tubby fuck lived under the delusion that he was some kind of ladies man. The ladies, of course, would strongly disagree with this. This had been material for much amusement among me and my friends in college. The problem was Greg had never learned his lesson and was now the terror of Amy's Bar as well. Ladies beware. And, of course, since we were the closest thing he

had to friends, except for dear old mom, when things got out of hand we had to step in and save the delusional idiot. Lucky us.

That's right, Wayne and I are the innocent fools that end up getting pounded and thrown around by disgruntled boyfriends and even girlfriends of any female Greg happened to take a fancy to. Isn't friendship grand?

Anyway, it was exactly three and a half weeks into my captivity in Hope that the real excitement happened.

Well, it was the morning, around seven am mind you, after an evening of getting blasted and making sure that dear Greg didn't end up getting himself a ghetto vasectomy from a lovely red head he made the mistake of trying to chat up that that chubby annoyance came to my door and started pounding on it. Oh, did I want to kick his ass.

"Devlin!" he bellowed on the other side of my apartment door. "It's Ma. I'm locked out and I need to get to her. She's not moving!"

Here I was harboring a massive hangover and felt like my head was going to literally explode with each bang on my door. I opened my eyes and regretted it because the rays of sunlight blasted into my retinas. "Hold on you damned…I'm coming." I yelled back at him in a croaking voice.

Surprisingly, I didn't even remember coming home and going to bed. My memory was a complete blank. I struggled to get up out of my bed, but the room was spinning and the floor was moving from side to side like a twisted funhouse. I stumbled to the door and came to the realization that I was fully dressed right down to still having on my black walkers and even my matching black trench-coat, which was wrinkled and bore the smell of sour boozes and vomit. Thankfully I was the owner of four such coats. It was essential for work, lots of pocket space and had that dramatic flaring out, like bat wings, when demons did that wind thing they liked to do during exorcisms.

I managed to get my hand to work well enough to unlock and open the door a quarter of the way so I could manage to stick my head out. I can imagine I looked a sight. I know I had that nasty morning hair, which reminded me of my short lived punk days. Fun memories there. Oh, and no doubt my eyes looked like something out of one of those Christopher Lee Dracula films. "What the fuck, Greg?" I said, my mouth tasting like puke. "Do you know what time it is?" I said before realizing that I didn't know the fucking time. I held my right arm up to my face and tried to get my eyes to focus long enough to read the face of my watch. When my eyes did the internal rage woke me right up. "Seven fucking o'clock! Are you fucking bonkers?..Don't answer that." I said enraged. In fact, I said the part last because Greg was so dense that he might actually answer that question. I let out a moan of pain as my body revolted over being disturbed at such an hour. My very bones were screaming.

"Please Devin, Ma locked herself in the bathroom. She wouldn't answer me when knocked to check on her. I went outside and checked through the bathroom window. She's not moving and seems to be out cold!" he explain to me in a panic.

“Why don’t you just break in the door?” I asked with amazing cognition, given my condition and the invisible guy banging the cymbals on my skull.

“I don’t want us to lose our security deposit. Oh, bother, we’ve only been here a week.” Greg pointed out. “Please, Devlin!”

I let out another pained sigh. As much of an idiot as Greg was he did make a reasonable point. Damon and I had lost a lot of security deposits in our time and it was never a fun thing. I have to admit even after all these years I’m still a bit of a softy. Damned weakness.

“Ok, but you’re gonna owe me big for this.” I informed him pointing my finger in his face. I knew this wasn’t going to end well, but that was my lot in life it seemed.

So, Greg and I headed out of the building and made our way to the back where bathroom window for his apartment was located. The window was next to the pull down ladder for the old rusty fire escape. The brick walls were covered multicolored graffiti, some of it Neo Nazi symbols. The ground was covered with weeds, discarded booze bottles, soiled paper bags, syringes, as well as human feces. The smell of urine burned my nose and made my eyes water. Lovely place to be in my fragile condition.

I could instantly see why Greg came to me for help. The window was small, far too small for Greg’s girth to get through. From the look of it it might even be a bit of a tight squeeze for me. I could imagine Greg trying to go through that window and getting stuck half way, like in the Winnie the Pooh story Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree. He would have ended up with his ass stuck out the window in the breeze and his chubby legs dangling until some drunk or homeless person found him and got help. That would have been amusing. But Greg was smart enough to get me and now I’m the one who will be pushing myself through the window. Wonderful.

“I’m gonna need you to give me a little push up.” I told him. The reason was because the window was a bit higher than eye level. I would have needed something to stand on, which there wasn’t anything within sight. Lucky I had dear old Greg.

I immediately regretted asking for assistance because Greg grabbed me by the back of my pants and lifted me high enough to gain access to the window. But, inadvertently, Greg had also given me a very painful wedgie, which was less than appreciated. Also, the hulking idiot decided to help me get in the window by pushing me through as well.

“No…no, stop!” I screamed at him but he wasn’t listening.

I found myself literally flying through the window. I slammed into Greg’s mom and knocked her off the toilet. I hit the bathroom door with my face. She ended up landing in a sprawl on the floor with her skirt hiked up to her waist, her granny panties hanging on her left white tennis shoe.

“RAPE!!!” she screamed at me. “Greg, a rapist broke in the bathroom and is molesting me!”

I turned to explain myself and wish I hadn't, given her compromised condition. My head felt like it was about to explode. "No, you're making a mistake Mrs. Titerton. It's me, Devlin Darck, Greg's friend."

Mrs. Titerton held her hands up defensively. "Help me!" she continued to scream, each word was needles ripping into my tortured head.

Then suddenly there was hammering on the door. "MA!!!" Greg yelled from the other side. "I'm coming, Ma! I'm coming to save you!"

With a loud crack the door burst open, a section of the door frame coming away with it. Greg stumbled into the bathroom and looked down at his mom, who was still sitting on the floor with her legs open wide and her skirt pulled back.

"He saw my private parts!" she yelled at her son and pointing at me. I had thrown myself to the side on pure instinct and was hugging the side of the gleaming white bathtub.

"Devlin?" Greg looked at me with pure shock. Then his expression changed for a second and I swear the cubby bastard looked like he wanted to throttle me.

"You threw me in here you brainless twit!" I yelled back at him, giving him a look that was an equivalent to a mental slap to the head.

Greg blinked a couple of times. It was at this moment his mind seemed to catch up to him. "Oh, bother… Ma, I had Devlin come in here because the door was locked and you were out cold on the toilet. I thought I was going to lose you, Ma."

Personally, and I know you're going to hate me for saying this, I think Greg would have been better off if the old girl had croaked. Greg would be free of his chains and be able to have a real life. But that was just my opinion on the matter. Ignore me.

Mrs. Titerton was silent for a couple of moments as she processed what had happened, like her son. Then she pulled down her skirt and said, "You're such a good son." I seriously felt like puking on the bathroom floor when I heard that. The height of dysfunction.

As for me I managed to get off the floor and slip past Greg and out the door while he was explaining to his mom. On my way out of the bathroom I looked at the damaged door and thought, *Well, there goes that security deposit.* It was such a wonderful punchline for such an overwhelmingly fucked up situation.

I headed to the living room and sat on the amusing plastic covered couch. Seriously I could give a flying fuck about it. All I wanted was a few minutes of silence and calm to help dull the pain in my body and mind. Unfortunately, usually this rarely works out.

Greg's mom walked into the living room and gave me a disgusted look. "You need to clean yourself up, young man, you smell like a drunkard. You should take some lessons from my dear son, Gregory. He knows how to comport himself as a proper gentleman.

I nearly broke out in laughter, which definitely would not have been a wise thing to do in my sensitive condition. I would love for dear old mom to see her 'proper gentleman' of a son at Amy's after downing four pints of beer and trolling after the ladies. I'm sure the old darling would have a heart attack if she saw that. But, there was that annoying 'friendship' thing that kept me at bay.

Then, old lady went over to the, white painted, birdcage that was positioned right next to the living room window, which was thankfully covered in white cloth drapes. Unfortunately, I noticed that drapes were stained with tiny splatters of blood. It was at that moment the old woman let out a horrified shriek. And once again I felt like my skull was getting ready to explode.

Greg came stumbling into the living room. He was pulling up his tan slacks up over a pair of blue and red striped boxer shorts. It was a vision I never want to see again.

As he passed the couch he yelled at the top of his lungs "Ma!" God bless the bastard the sound nearly knocked me off the damned couch.

He was just finishing closing his brawn when he arrived at what was obviously a murder scene, be it in miniature. 'Sherlock Pooh' took one look and immediately yelled out, "It's that damned cat, Satan. He finally did it…Oh, bother!"

This got my interest. Satan, as the renters in this apartment building had dubbed the rogue Bengal cat that trolled the halls of The Imperial Palace causing mayhem with any tenant that crossed its path. I'd had a few encounters with the hairy little fuck myself. His usual tactic was to run up behind me and claw me in the back of my legs. One occasion he actually climbed the frame of my door and waited for me to come home from a night at Amy's. The bitch-assed thing nailed me on my scalp line with his claw so bad I bled into my right eye before I could get inside and grab some toilet paper to stop the bleeding. Of course, my all-time favorite incident was when the little monster shit and pissed in front of my apartment door. I ended up getting the surprise and nearly slipped in the stinking puddle. I'm still amazed that a single cat could generate that much shit and piss. All I know is I had to thoroughly scrub my walkers to get the smell off them. I don't care if you are a dumb animal, you don't fucking mess with a man's leather walkers.

After that particular incident I got so mad that I actually called on Vernon and asked him to smite the little bugger. His answer was in his bored monotone, "I'm not your personal cat terminator. Don't waste my time on your petty vendettas. I'm here to assist you in fighting demons and cleansing your soul, though it is undeserving." *Bastard!* I thought, but didn't express it aloud. Though, I'm sure he knew it. He's aware of everything I think, it's an angel thing.

Anyway, so it was, even in my pain, I decided to drag myself up and have a look. The remains of two yellow parakites were strewn across the bottom of their cage.

I knew instantly that Satan the cat had nothing to do with this. In fact, I got the chill I always get when something supernatural is involved. The remains didn't look like they were ripped apart, like cat claws would do. They looked more like something had scooped up the two

birds into its mouth, chewed them, and spit them out. Whatever it was also did it without damaging the birdcage, which is something nothing corporeal could achieve.

"Sorry to tell you this, Greg, but Satan's innocent." I informed him.

"Bother, how do you know, Devlin?" Greg asked, though he didn't look like he wanted to know the answer. The truth was Greg didn't like complications in his life, especially if the complication had anything to do with his dear old mom.

"There is no way you can be sure about that, young man." Greg's mom said, giving me a cross look. "That cat is a menace to this building. If not him then what killed my babies?

"There's a way I can provide that answer, but it's a bitch even when I'm not trying to get over a hangover and I really don't want to try it. And I sincerely doubt you'll believe a word I say when I do it." I admitted.

"Do what, young man?" she asked, eyeing me critically.

"I have a gift that I got many years ago when I died and was somehow resurrected." I tried to explain. Actually the so called gift felt more like a curse to me. "I have the ability to touch an object and get a complete history on it. It is a practice called Psychometry. But in my case I can also get an impression of anything that has had contact with it."

"That sounds like crazy talk or the work of The Devil." Greg's mom said, giving me a dirty look. Then, she turned to her son. "I raised you to be a good Christian and now I hear you associating with minions of Satan." She hit Greg across his head and he cringed like a child.

"But, Ma, Devlin and his brother work for The Vatican. Delvin fights demons for a living. He does God's work." Greg told her hold his hands up defensively to the short old woman.

"Don't blaspheme, boy!" she yelled, holding her hand up. But then she paused and lowered it.

She looked over at me with distrust. "So, you think that a demon is lose in my home? You expect me to believe such things?"

"As I said, mam, I don't know what killed your birds, but I might if I touch the cage and read it." I told her. "It can't hurt." I lied. The truth was it would definitely hurt me to do it, but if I didn't it could build into something far worse than some discomfort on my part. Also, there was that annoy friend thing yet again. Can't leave a bud in a dangerous situation, even if his mom is a controlling old bitch.

"Very well, young man, but I will keep my eyes on you the whole time."

"I've no doubt about that." I said, giving her a confident smile that I didn't feel.

Preparing myself for what I was about to experience I moved up to the birdcage and placed my hands on top of it. My body jolted and every muscle in my body clenched. I couldn't

even breath. My mind was overwhelmed with the memories of any being that came in contact with that birdcage.

The first thing I found out was that this particular birdcage had been a display model so hundreds of people had touched it over the years. Then finally after an eternity of life histories I finally got to Greg and his mother and how they bought the cage at a reduced price. If I couldn't have guessed that.

I saw all of Greg's mom's, Edith's, history leading up to when she touched the birdcage after she saw the murdered birds. Amusingly I also found out that she wasn't as sick as she pretended to be to keep Greg at her beck and call. She had over the years went out of her way to keep Greg single and at her side. In fact, the reason she had passed out on the toilet had been because she had had a hearty breakfast of three full bottles of red wine along with her pain meds while Greg had been sleeping his drinking binge off from the night before. Truly, a messed up situation.

In regard to Greg, I saw that he was the one who had to feed, provide water, and clean the birdcage, even though he really didn't like birds. Also, I experienced how much he worshiped me in college, and how much he still did. The poor stupid fool. Disturbingly, I got a front row view of all the women he had pursued over the years, including all of his perverted fantasies about them. I don't even want to think of the perversions he had in his mind regarding the Goth bartender at Amy's, much less his thoughts on Wayne's wife. That tubby shit even had had dirty thoughts about my ex-girlfriend, and now guardian spirit, Carol when we were in college. Thankfully with Carol pissed and avoiding me I would be able purge myself of the images before speaking to her again.

Soon after a bit more searching I found what I was looking for, the anomaly in the rushing river of memories that flooded me. The memories were those of a dog, a Pitbull who had been named Nobbie in life. Nobbie was born to the dog of a German family who I gathered were breeding pitbulls for sale. The husband and wife kept Nobbie and his litter long enough to potty train them. They actually kept Nobbie longer than his other siblings and trained him to sit, lay down, and walk on a leash before selling him to their daughter's boyfriend, who was named Marcus.

Marcus was into dog fighting and used Nobbie for this purpose. The poor dog, who was not really aggressive in temperament was forced to fight other Pitbulls to the death. During his time with Marcus he took the lives of what I estimated at eleven other dogs, mainly by ripping out their throats. In my vision I felt Nobbie's shame and fear of death during this time. His dog fighting career ended with a fight that he won, but barely survived. He ended up with a damaged front-left paw that left him with a nasty limp.

He ended up, rather than being put down ground up as dog food, sold from one hell to another when a certain sadistic Russian guy named Hugo Rabbinauski came into his life. Now, how do I know this asshole's full name you ask? Well, it so happens that said Rabbinauski happened to be the former tenant of the apartment that dear ole Greg and his mom reside in. He is also the cousin of the apartment manager and works as a maintenance man. He moved out the

apartment a week after I arrived. I had thought it had something to do with me, but now I know the horrifying truth.

You see Rabbinauski had bought Nobbie from Marcus to use as an instrument of intimidation. He would take the poor animal with him whenever he left his apartment. If someone approached him he had trained Nobbie to growl and snap at them. Nobbie, of course, had no intention to hurt anyone. He didn't actually have to because the vicious act was enough to put people on guard because most people believed the fable that all pitbulls were vicious killers. This always made people nervous in Rabbinausi's presence and from how he took advantage of it gave him a sense of power, like any bully.

He even used Nobbie to scare and control his unfortunate girlfriend, Janice. Anytime she displeased him he would use the dog to scare her back in line. Of course, this lead to Nobbie's unfortunate demise. One night Janice stopped being intimidated and ended up standing up to Rabbinauski. It was then that he crossed the line and ordered Nobbie to attack her. Nobbie barked and growled but could not bring himself to hurt her.

Rabbinauski yelled at the dog and kicked him to get him to obey, but he still refused. This gave Janice the chance get out the door and run for her life. It was then that Nobbie's usefulness to Rabbinauski ended and so did his life.

"You rotten sumbitch dog, I, Rabbinauski, ordered you." He screamed in furious anger and kicked the poor dog so hard with his steel toed work boots that Nobbie let out a howl of pain and was sent tumbling against the wall next to the entry door.

I felt this kick. It reverberated through the dog's body. I heard and felt rib bones snap from the impact.

Rabbinauski grabbed a large pipe wrench from out of his work bag, which was sitting on the nearby couch. "Rabbinauski will teach you not to disobey you master!"

Nobbie managed stumbled to his feet. He whined and crouched against the wall. He knew his master intended to really hurt him this time. I could feel his intense fear.

Rabbinauski lifted the heavy wrench over his head and brought it down on the dog. The wrench hit Nobbie across the center of his back and there was a loud crunch and his legs went numb and he fell to his side again. He couldn't move. He was helpless.

Nobbie looked up at his master as if trying to beg for his life, but he could see from the cold expression and his angry snarl that it useless.

Rabinauski lifted the wrench one last time. He looked the broken dog on the floor in his eyes and brought the wrench down on Nobbie's head. There was no pain this time but a sound like dishes shattering and Nobbie's soul was free from his body.

Nobbie's soul looked over at its once home. His head looked like a bag of mush. Pieces of bone jutted through the skin on his cranium. Brain matter mixed with blood was leaking was

leaking from his mussel. His eyes were popped out of the broken puzzle pieces that had once been his eye sockets. They lay on either side of his nose still connect by their optic nerves.

Rabbinauski looked one last time at his handiwork. “Fuck you dog.” He said before kicking the corpse one last time and spitting on it.

In all my years fighting demons from my personal experience human beings can be far more monstrous than any horned minion Satan could ever throw at humanity. The world I live in is mostly seen through darker lenses. It is one of the unfortunate things about doing this job. There are days I have to fight to remember that there is a brighter, more positive, side to humanity. This is definitely one of those days. I could kill to be shitfaced at this moment. Anything to blur this vision from my mind.

After that the monster who was named Hugo Rabbinauski took off for several hours. When he returned he immediately headed into the other room and came back carrying a pry bar. He pulled up the floor boards to reveal a space under the floor next to a big metal pipe. He pushed Nobbie’s remains into the space.

He left the apartment again and came back with new boards, nails, and even glossy sealer to block the eventual smell. Nobbie and I watched him as he worked. When he was finished it was obvious the floor had been badly repaired so he took the rug from under the coffee table and covered it up after it dried.

It was two weeks later that Rabbinauski moved out of the apartment, leaving the furniture behind and his horrible secret.

I had arrived a week before he moved out so I had no idea about any of this.

It was two weeks later that dear ole Greg and his mom moved in. Nobbie wasn’t happy living with strangers who he thought was ignoring him. This of course led to him getting frustrated and ending up chewing up the Tweetie twins. It was after seeing this incident that the connection was finally broken and I was released.

I immediately let out the sharp breath I had obviously been holding. Nausea hit me. I stumbled backward and landed hard on my back. Amusingly, to be precise, I actually landed right on top of the rug that covered Nobbie’s resting place.

I opened my eyes and was startled to see Greg and his mom standing over me. Greg was looking down at me with concern. His mom just absently looked down at me through her spectacles that made her squinting eyes look bigger than they were.

“Oh bother, are you alive, Devlin?” he asked.

“Obviously since I’m looking right at you.” I said with a groan of pain. My back was killing me.

Greg held out his hand to me to help me up but instead I grabbed the arm of the nearby couch and pulled myself up.

“So, did you find out what is happening?” Greg’s mom asked giving me a stony stare. It was obvious that she could give a rat’s ass what my condition was.

“Indeed I did.” I told her. “And after I clean myself up a bit I’ll be taking care of it.”

“What you gonna do, Devlin?” Greg asked, sounding way too innocent for his own good.

“”Me, Greg? I’m going to go see a man about a dog.” I told him. “While I’m gone don’t do anything…I mean nothing to irritate this thing. Leave everything up to me. Understood.” I told the two of them.

Greg nodded like a loyal whipped puppy.

But, with the look she gave me I knew Greg’s mom wasn’t happy with me telling her what to do. I knew I needed to get what I needed to do done quickly. I almost considered forgoing cleaning myself up first, but unfortunately connecting to Nobbie’s past had the side-effect of sobering me up. The smell of puke on me was so strong it had begun to bother me. Also, I knew that Mr. Hugo Rabbinauski probably would immediately slam his door in my face rather than listen to me in my present condition. Cleaned up I might have a chance at getting in the door. A slim chance. Of course, the hairs on the back of my neck was telling me that trouble was coming. But of course it was, no way could it be clean and simple. Nope, that was my life.

So, I headed up to my room, disrobed, and gave myself a quick sponge bath because the “high quality” shower wasn’t working. Then regretfully, I ended up standing in front of the sink preparing to brush my teeth to give myself pearly whites and get rid of the taste of puke from my mouth. But unfortunately that required me to look in the mirror. Of course, he was waiting to greet me in my reflection.

Mixed in with my face and upper body in the mirror were aspects of the demon that possessed me all those years ago. Thankfully I no longer have to see the long bull-like horns, pointed ears, pig-like snout, and more importantly the damned dagger-like teeth with that long snake tongue that had a life of its own. I was eternally thankful I didn’t have to start and end my days seeing that tongue slide over those sharp teeth mockingly and stained them pink with the blood that dribbled from it.

You see, like Doran Gray, I’m forced to face my damaged soul. Unlike Doran whose reflection of the corruption of his soul came in the form of his portrait, I was trapped seeing the corruption of my soul in refections. Thankfully, in videos and photographs I look like myself. But with reflective surfaces from a turned off TV screen to a shiny paint job on a car there it is to mock and remind me that even after all these years I still got a lot more of this nightmare to look forward to before I’m finally free.

“Have a nice day, motherfucker.” I said to my reflection before shooting the bird at it.

After that I pulled my suitcase out from under the bed and pulled out a fresh pair of black trousers, a black button down shirt, black socks. Yes, I like black clothes. Einstein had multiple sets of clothes. He figured it saved him the effort of having to choose. For me it’s because I’m

usually too fucked up to choose and really can give a fuck if I'm stylish or not. I have far more important things to worry about.

Then I did the final touch. I went over to the closet and grabbed one of three clean trenchcoats that hung there. Each one has its pockets loaded with demon fighting supplies, including a silver cross that was blessed by the pope himself.

Finally looking like I could face the world I went to my bedside and picked up the mug of coffee that was sitting there and downed it. It was cold and tasted burned but it jarred me the rest of the way back to life. I was finally ready for my appointment with a certain Hugo Rabbanauski.

It was easy to find Rabbanauski's apartment, everybody in the Imperial Palace knew where that fucker lived. It was just general knowledge. Also, it was the only apartment with a large no solicitation sign on the door.

"It is day off. Come back tomorrow. Rabbanauski say this." I heard the Russian yell from the other side of the door after I knocked. I also heard a dog barking.

Ignoring what Rabbanauski said, I knocked on the door again, this time noticeably harder.

This time the door was roughly opened. Rabbanauski stood part way out of the partially open door. The dog, another gray Pitbull, was blocked by Rabbanauski's leg. The dog was growling viciously and showing its teeth. Unlike Nobbie, who had been just putting on a show but had no intention to attack, this dog gave me the distinct impression that it wasn't playing.

"I say it my day off." Rabbanauski said, glaring at me with annoyance. "Rabbanauski say come back tomorrow."

"I don't think so. This can't wait, Rabbitinski." I said, and yes I purposely mispronounced his name and from the look on his face it had the planned effect. It made him that much more pissed.

"Rabbanauski said...!" He started to say but I cut him off.

"I heard what you said, asshole." I said to him while locking eyes with him. "And I said this can't wait."

The dog got more agitated. I guess it sensed the tension.

"Sadie, sizen." He said in a commanding tone. The dog immediately sat down and let out a grumbly growl.

"I know you." Rabbanauski said after a couple moments pause. "You that guy that move into apartment above my old one. You that California guy."

"Yeah, nice that you remember." I said, giving him an amused smile.

"You not that smart, California." He told me.

“Oh, there’s where you are definitely wrong, Hugo.” It was at that moment that I grabbed him by his armed and jerked him the rest of the way out the door. Caught the narcissistic fuck totally by surprise.

Immediately the dog, Sadie, started to run at me. I quickly kicked the door shut and I heard the dog rammed into it hard. Then there was the sound of heavy scratching and the dog barking from the other side of the door.

“You bastard!” he yelled at me. “You dare put your hands on me. I have you arrested for assault.”

“Oh, sorry about that but I just needed to separate you from the dangerous slavering guard dog. It was rather distracting. Also, I wouldn’t be mentioning the police given your situation.”

“You talking gibberish, California.” He commented.

“My fucking name is Devlin Darck you fucking Ruskie.” I yelled in his arrogant face. “And I know about your dog.”

“What about dog? Sadie is good dog. Dog has done nothing wrong.” He said with annoyance back at me.

I grabbed his immaculate white shirt with both fists, pulled his face up to mine, and glared into his eyes. In a low voice, almost a whisper, I said, “Not that dog. The other dog, Nobbie.”

“What?” he lied. “Dog got out and ran away and not come back.”

I gave him a nasty smile. “Now we know better than that.”

But, of course, dear ole Greg came jogging down the hall. “Devlin!” he screamed between heavy breaths.

I broke my stare with that fucking Russian and looked over at my tubby annoyance. “What the fuck has happened, Greg? I gave you and your mom simple enough instructions, simple enough that even a complete idiot could understand. How the fuck have you cocked up?” My displeasure was as clear as my message had been.

“I wasn’t me, Devlin.” He said, still breathing heavily. “It was Ma.”

Yeah, I could have guessed that. That old woman was stubborn as shit and was definitely the type that wouldn’t listen to instructions. I’d dealt with a number of people like this and it never ended well.

“She said she saw red eyes watching her from the corner of the room. She told me to get Father Benjamin from down the hall from us. I told her that you said not to do anything until you got back. She told me that it was her apartment and she gave the orders.”

I closed my eyes and shook my head with a frustrated smirk on my face.

“She ordered me. I can’t disobey Ma.” He said, whimpering like a little kid who knew he had done wrong.

I let out a sigh and thought, *Oh, yes you could have. You could have if you had a pair between those flabby thighs of yours, but you are nothing but a pussy whipped excuse for a male…*

“So, I went and got the father.” He looked uncomfortable as he spoke. “He brought his robe, holy water, and Bible and started doing a blessing on the apartment…”

“Oh, and don’t tell me,” I cut him off with a sarcastic grin on my face. “all hell broke lose…”

“Oh, bother!” Greg said, looking very guilty.

I patted Greg on his shoulder, though I would have rather put both hands around his neck and ringed it. “Perfect.”

“What is it that is happening?” Rabbanauski asked, giving me and Greg a confused look.

“One thing at a time, Hugo.” I told him, giving him a quick glance, holding my finger up to him to silence him, and getting back the remorseful Greg. “Greg, could you escort Mr. Rabbanauski back to your apartment and make sure he doesn’t get away? Can you do that Greg? Or do you need to consult with your mommy first?”

Greg gave me a hurt look, but nodded his head. “Yeah, I can do that.” Then he let out a sad, childish, snorting sound.

“Where are you taking Rabbanauski?” Rabbanauski asked angrily.

“Oh, we’re taking you to a reunion.” I said before starting to head down the hall towards Greg’s apartment.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Greg put his hand on Rabbanauski’s shoulder and start leading him down the hall behind me. Rabbanauski didn’t look happy, but he didn’t resist.

When we got to the apartment I found that the door had been blown off its hinges and was laying on the hallway floor. Bright light was flooding out from the doorway, like someone had setup a spotlight in the room aiming through the doorway. I knew this wasn’t the case. I also knew this was an indication that the situation was a lot worse than what I had anticipated.

I shook my head and expressed my professional opinion of the situation. “Fuck.”

Shading my eyes with my right arm I walked into the stream of light and through the doorway with Greg and Rabbanauski reluctantly following behind me. Thankfully, the light intensity lessened significantly after we got inside. Yep, I could clearly see the mess I was going to have to somehow fix, Lucky me.

An intense pillar of light was flaring out from a rug that was covering the area of the floor where I had seen Rabbanauski bury Nobbie under the floorboards. Within the pillar was an

extremely distorted manifestation of Nobbie that made him look eight feet tall and a lot fiercer than the poor Pitbull's corporeal form had been.

To make things worse the manifestation's eye were glowing red, which any initiated demon hunter would know is not actually an indication of evil but a self-defense mechanism that spirits can manifest out of fear and stress. Unfortunately, the chubby idiot, Father Benjamin, who was dressed in full mass robes and, of course, purple stole over his shoulders, was not initiated in anything related to battling real evil much less taking on any form of exorcism. Nope, this guy had spent his time as a priest simply traveling around to churches doing masses, lectures on the Bible, and getting drunk off sacramental wine when he wasn't gorging himself on the believers' money from the collection plates. More than likely taking part in an exorcism was this buffoon's dream ever since he went to see The Exorcist on opening day.

"The power of Christ compels you! The power of Christ compels you! Begone, Satan!" Father Benjamin bellowed with false bravery at the manifestation while splashing holy water at it.

He was reading from a rather beat up and shabby copy of The Rites of Exorcism. Since I know he couldn't have gotten permission for this farce from The Vatican I assumed he acquired his copy from off the internet, more than likely off Ebay. Damn, Ebay!

To those in the battle against evil Ebay got the amusing nickname of The Devil's Choice Marketplace, given all the demonic and cursed items foolish people buy and sell from there. And, obviously including a certain obese priest with a Father Marin complex.

Next to the Father was Greg's mom, who also had an equally shabby copy of The Rites as well as her own bottle of holy water which she was of splashing at the drastically warped image of poor Nobbie. "Begone, Satan!" she yelled at the image while shaking her bottle of water excitedly. "It's Christ that compels you…"

Yes, dear friends, it was clearly a royally fucked up situation. Well, first things first, I had to deal with these two idiots that were traumatizing the true victim of this situation.

I knew this was going to be a joy because I could see Father Benjamin was having the time of his life. Same for the old bitch. Definitely fun times. But that was part of my job description, Devlin Darck, party killer.

I immediately headed over to Father Benjamin and spoke into his ear. "You have to stop this, Father. You're not authorized by the church to take this action."

"You're wrong, demon hunter." The arrogant, chubby, bastard yelled back at me. "I'm doing God's work. The Holy Spirit is with me. You're just jealous because God chose me over you, but you are the unbeliever. You are the outsider here, not I!"

I let out a sigh. *All right.* I thought glancing up at the ceiling. *Your will be done*. Then I open handedly hit Father Benjamin under his chin. The Father's head shot back and he fell backward onto the wood floor like a felled tree. I figured I'd have some serious explaining to a certain tall, bald, angel. Well, so be it.

Greg's mom let out a scream, like a feral creature and started to charge at me. I prepared myself to knock out the old woman as well, which I knew would end my friendship with Greg. I could only hope. But then the unexpected happen.

The warped image of Nobbie somehow managed to jump halfway out of the energy pillar, blocking Greg's mom's way. The image let out a thunderous roar right into the old woman's face. A look of overpowering surprise and fear covered Greg's mom's face. Her eyes rolled back into her head and she fell to the floor, joining her associate Father Benjamin.

"MA!" Greg screamed and started to go for Nobbie. I quickly put a restraining hand against his chest

"Don't." I warned him. "She's not hurt, only passed out. Nobbie was just defending himself the only way he can now."

"That thing tore my mom's birds apart." Greg pointed out.

"He did that to make us aware of him. He's trapped and scared. All he is is a poor suffering animal looking for release. He desperately wants to move on. You would do whatever you could if the roles were reversed." I told him. Greg didn't look convinced.

"He looks pretty intimidating to me." Greg said glaring at the warped image in front of him.

"This is because of what your mom and that idiot Father Benjamin was doing. I told your mom not to do anything. She caused what's happening now." I pushed. "This is all a fear response." I gave Greg a hard look. "Think Greg. You damn well know I know what I'm talking about. Trust me."

Greg looked down at his fallen mother. He closed his eyes and groaned like he was in pain. Then he let out a sigh, opened his eyes and looked me right in my eyes. "Oh, bother, how do we put an end to this?" He pleaded, holding up his hands in a gesture of surrender.

I put my hand on Greg's shoulder. "We have to free the dog's soul by freeing his body and show it to the world. It's right there under that rug." I pointed at the rug that was on the floor right where the energy pillar was coming out of the floor.

I pulled the rug away revealing four badly replaced boards in the floor. I looked over at Greg. "We need something to pull those up."

"No problem." Greg said enthusiastically. Then he looked at Rabbanauski. "Oh, bother, what about him?"

I gave Greg an amused grin. "Oh, don't worry about him. Our buddy Rabbanauski wouldn't dream of trying to get away." I waved over at the distorted image of Nobbie. "Not with our friend over there looking at him like he's dinner." I looked over at Rabbanauski and grinned at him. "Isn't that right, Rabbanauski?"

The Russian glared at me but didn't answer.

Greg headed over to a nearby closet and pulled out the biggest pry bar I had ever seen.

As he returned, Greg casually informed me, “I do a bit of demolition on the side to get beer money. Don’t tell mom. She wouldn’t approve. Oh, bother.”

“No problem.” I said, waving my hand. “Have fun, Mr. Professional, it’s all yours.”

Greg looked over at Rabbanauski again. He gave him a disgusted look. “My pleasure.”

“No…No… You can’t do this… I, Rabbanauski, say this.” Rabbanauski exclaimed, a terrified look on his face. He tried to step forward to stop Greg, but I got in his way.

I looked the Russian in his eyes. “Frankly, Rabbanauski, I, Devlin Darck, say that you are going to stand there and face what you’ve done. And I could give a flying fuck what you got to say on this matter.”

Greg moved close to where the four miss matched boards were in the floor. He kept nervously glancing over at Nobbie’s image as he approached, but the image kept its position and it simply watched him as he moved. I was sure that any movement from the image would result in Greg jumping back and dropping the oversized pry bar. Thankfully Nobbie was being good and didn’t move other than following Greg with his eyes.

Greg lifted the bar over his and brought it down with practiced proficiency. The teeth of the bar broke through the stained floor right between the closest of his target boards and its neighbor. Greg pushed the handle of the bar down and with a light cracking sound and the sound of nails pulling free the teeth of the bar pulled the first board loose and it popped up and out.

Immediately thousands of flies flooded from the hole along with the foul smell of rot and putrefaction. Greg dropped the bar and stumbled back, shielding his face with his arm from the humming insects. The flies flew up to the ceiling and formed into a large black living cloud that moved in and out of the pillar of light.

“Greg, we need to get the rest of those boards up!” I yelled at Greg over the sound of all those flies. The noise was vibrating the room.

“I’m gonna throw up!” Greg whined back at me.

“Do whatever you need to do to finish the job.” I told him unsympathetically. “We need those boards out of there now.”

Greg tightened his lips and shook his head. Then he bent down, picked up the pry bar again, and took three reluctant steps toward the hole. Immediately he began to gag, but managed to regain control but he still looked nauseated.

He bent slightly and stuck the teeth of the bar under the next board and used the board on his side of the hole as a fulcrum to pull the board up. It came out easily. When he was pulling up the next board he made the mistake of glancing down into the hole in the floor. Immediately he puked down the front of himself. Yellow, chunky bile dampened his sweater and splashed down on his shoes causing him to stumble back in reaction.

“One last board.” I reminded him.

Greg looked back at me with a dagger stare. His lower face was covered in bile and little chunks of half-digested food dropped from his chin.

But like a dedicated worker, Greg steadied himself and actually hopped over the mostly opened hole. When on the other side of the hole he jammed the teeth of the bar into the side of the board. He pushed the bar down and again with a cracking sound and the screech of nails being pulled free, the board popped up and the one end of it dropped into the hole.

Greg used the pry bar to knock two of the boards that were partially still over the hole out of the way. Then he grabbed the final board with his free hand. The end of the board was covered with foul smelling gray liquid and maggots.

Greg turned and ended up puking on the living room couch.

The pillar of light disappeared and the flies scattered right after the final board was pulled. The image of Nobbie morphed and in the place of the distorted Hell hound was a very sad looking transparent gray Pitbull. Thankfully I was the only one who could see him because Nobbie still had the red eyes, which was a manifestation of his fear.

“Oh, bother!” Greg cursed as he wiped the puke from his mouth. “Did it do it? Is the dog free?” Greg asked.

“Not yet.” I said looking at Rabbanauski and giving him a grin. “Your turn.” I told the Russian.

“What you talk about?” Rabbanauski asked. When I didn’t answer immediately he got angry. “I, Rabbanauski, demand know what you talk about. I want know why you dragged me this place?”

“You know why, Hugo.” I said, giving him a cold look to match my cold tone. “It’s time to pay the piper. It’s time for you to face the results of your actions.”

I pushed him forward. He fought me. “No!”

“Yes, you arrogant fuck. Time to take credit for you handiwork!” I yelled in his face before sweeping his legs with my foot, causing him to fall hard onto his knees in front of the hole. Then with every bit of strength I could muster I forced him to bend forward and look into the hole at the remains of Nobbie. “Nooo, I no see!”

That monster, Rabbanauski, had decided to put Nobbie’s body under the floor right next to the hot water pipe. The heat from the pipe had cause the corpse to decay faster. During its time under the floor Nobbie’s midsection had bloated and exploded, which cause its putrefying innards to pour out. Flies had infested the body and lied eggs, so it was now alive with flies and wiggling maggots. There were also flies and maggots congregated around the shattered remains of the poor dogs head.

“No!” Rabbanauski screamed.

I was about to say something clever, but I saw something that caught me totally by surprise. Sticking out from beneath the rotting remains of Nobbie was a gray tinged, semi-rotten, female human hand. I knew exactly whose hand it was because it had pink nails like Rabbanauski's girlfriend Janice had in my vision. Somehow that bastard had done the job himself after Nobbie refused to attack her. He must have tracked her down and killed her while he was away in my vision. But the surprising part was I'd had no clue that Nobbie had had company in his unfortunate grave. My vision hadn't revealed that important piece of information.

Rabbanauski must have sense my surprise because he immediately elbowed me in my ribcage, stumbled to his feet, and ran out the open doorway.

Greg jumped over the hole and took off after him.

Didn't matter to me though. The Russian bastard had done what I needed him to do. By facing what he had done he had freed Nobbie's soul.

I kneeled down and looked over at the transparent Pitbull who was standing on the other side of the hole. "Hello, Nobbie." I said in a soft and soothing way,

The ghost dog looked over at me curiously and cocked his head slightly. His eyes were still glowing red.

"Well, look at you." I said enthusiastically. "Aren't we a handsome boy? Yeah, you're a good boy. That's what you are."

The red eyes slowly changed to their natural gray. Also, his tail started to cautiously wag.

I knew this was the first time he had been called a good boy and spoke to in a friendly manner since he was a puppy.

"Don't worry, Nobbie." I told him. "I'm here to send you to a beautiful place where you can spend eternity playing with other dogs in peace." I leaned in a bit closer and said confidentially, "I want to apologize a head of time for the guy who is going to be taking you to the beautiful place. He is a bit of a hard ass, but I promise he's one of the good guys."

Then I got up and looked up toward the ceiling. "Vernon!" I yelled. "I need you down here, Mr. Fluffy Wings!"

I looked down, turned, and was semi-startled because the bald, tall, thin, white suited, white winged form of the angel was standing uncomfortably close. My nose nearly bumped into his chest.

He looked at me unpleasantly. "I am not your minion to be summoned like that. The only reason I have the displeasure of associating with you is that I have been given the tasks of channeling my angelic energy through you to defeat demons and to heal your soul, though you are unworthy of the honor of being allowed access to the gates of Heaven. But that is not *my* choice. It is my father's, who *is* my lord and master."

As I listened to him mouthing off I saw something amusing. “Is that a hickie I see there?” I said with amusement, pointing at the red mark on Vernon’s neck.

Vernon looked uncomfortable. “I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“You shrewd bastard. You took my advice and got you some.” I said with a Cheshire cat grin. Then I lightly punched him in the shoulder. “Good for you.” I said happily.

“Don’t stick your grubby *monkey paws* on my person.” He said, sweeping his hand over the shoulder of his immaculate white suit like he was wiping off some dirt. “Why have you disturbed my *meditations*? This had better be important.”

“Well, if you want to call it that.” I said. From the look he gave me I thought it was wise that I get to the point. “I need you to do me a favor.”

“A favor.” He echoed with disgust. “I’m not here to do you any favors, *human*. We are not friends nor colleagues…”

“But you *are* an angel of Heaven and this *is* the duty of an angel of Heaven.” I pointed out.

“Indeed?” he said, raising an eyebrow. “And what duty are you talking about?”

“I have a lost soul to be taken to the gardens of Heaven.” I said, motioning toward Nobbie. “He has been trapped here and I just released him.”

Vernon let a sigh of resignation. “Very well, human.” He said in a monotone. “I’ll do this for you just this once, since this is actually heavenly business. But don’t ask me again.”

“Good with me.” I said.

“And you will not be getting any soul healing. This is not part of our assignment.” He added.

“I didn’t expect any.” I made clear.

“Good.” Vernon said. “Now, where is this lost soul you mentioned?”

I pointed over at Nobbie. “Right there. This poor creature has been trapped here. I managed to release him.”

“I can see that.” Vernon said, glancing at the hole in the floor and its grizzly contents. He motioned for Nobbie to come to him. “Come, Beast, paradise awaits you.”

“Nobbie.” I corrected Vernon.

“What was that, Human?” Vernon asked me.

“His name is Nobbie.” I informed him.

“Whatever.” Vernon said. Then he shook his head and let out a sigh. “Fine. Come… Nobbie. It is time to go.”

Nobbie cautiously approached Vernon and stood next to him.

Vernon lifted his arm and a rip appeared in reality.

Bright light poured from the opening. As my eyes adjusted I managed to get a quick glimpse of what laid beyond. I saw a vast field of green grass with multi-colored flowers scatter through it. The background was nothing but a wall of large majestic trees. A scent that could put the most expensive perfumes to shame along a feeling of absolute love and peace radiated from it.

"Follow me. Happiness and rest await you." Vernon said as he stepped forward through the opening.

Nobbie glanced over at me.

"Go on, Nobbie. Go on good boy." I urged him.

Nobbie wagged his tail and followed Vernon into the light.

Immediately after he and Vernon entered the rip in reality closed up leaving no trace of its existence.

At that moment Greg rushed back in. He was bleeding from four scratch marks on his forehead. "He…he got away." He told me, out of breath. "It was that damned cat, Satan! He attacked me when I was about to grab Rabbanauski. Rabbanauski got out the front door and was gone by the time I got away from that little monster. Oh, bother!" He held up his hands to show me the additional scratches that covered them.

"No damage done, Greg, besides that done to you that is." I assured him. "Nobbie is free and currently in Heaven and our dear friend, Rabbanauski, will be a wanted man once you get on the phone and call the police."

"For killing a dog?" Greg asked, looking at me with confusion.

"Well, that too. But I was referring to the dead woman who is currently laying under the putrefying dog."

"What? Oh fuck!" Greg blurted out.

"Greg Russell Titerton!" Greg's mom said, sitting up, turning to him and giving him a stern look. "I've taught you better than that. I will not tolerate a potty mouth, young man!"

Greg lowered his head in shame. "I'm sorry, Ma!"

"And so you should be. " She further corrected him. "It is the company you keep. A bunch of drunken hooligans." Then she looked over at me. "Especially you." She pointed at me. "You dare touch a messenger of the Lord. Damnation awaits you in Hell!"

"I've heard that a lot." I said, giving her a smirk.

"And what have you done to my home?" she asked noticing the obvious hole in the floor.

She scooted over to it and looked into it. She immediately let out a shocked scream and, thankfully, passed out again.

"Ma!" Greg yelled out.

And so that is my amusing tale of Nobbie the ghost dog. It took a little while before Greg recovered enough from the trauma of his mother passing out again before he finally called the cops.

When the police arrived they revived that idiot Father Benjamin, who pressed assault charges on me and made me spend the night in the local jail which was fine with me because I had the pleasure of being entertained by a drunken Irishman who was stumbling around the holding cell singing Irish ditties. Now that is what I call fun.

Thankfully, the Catholic Church made Father Benjamin pull the charges against me. He had no choice in the matter. The dear father was in deep shit with The Vatican for performing the rites of exorcism without The Vatican's permission. As a result, the father had his travel vouchers pulled and he is now posted some place where the church can keep a close eye on him so no embarrassing incidents like this will ever happen again.

As for Rabbanauski? He was eventually caught and is currently serving a life sentence for the murder of poor foolish Janice. The case made headlines. Of course, The Human Society pressed charges for animal abuse and murder against him, but the press had little interest in the death of poor Nobbie. Even the fact that Nobbie was a Pitbull didn't make a smidge of difference. It just didn't matter to the world, but to the people living in the Imperial Palace Apartments it did. Nobbie was one of us.

Amusingly, Greg and his mom decided to honor me with their presence for three weeks so they could find a new apartment to rent. It seems that they didn't want to remain in the "murder apartment" and Greg's mom decided that I owed them because I ordered the ripping up of their home. Lucky me.

Still, in the end Greg and his mom found themselves a new apartment several blocks away so I have had to suffer not having Greg visiting me constantly like he did when he was down stairs from me. I was so unhappy about this…Not! Happy time!!

But a week later, after they left, I was blessed. Damon was released from the hospital. He still had two castes on his legs, but they would heal. What mattered was my little brother was home, sort of. It was truly a time to celebrate, and so we did.

"So you went to college with these guys?" Damon asked, looking at the odd group of friends I'd invited to his welcome home party, even though the town of Hope was not really home. Nope, the closest thing to a home we had was the beat-up van we traveled around in. But did it truly matter? It was an excuse to get together and hang out at the bar and get drunk.

“Eh, sort of.” The truth was Wayne hadn’t attended a class at The College of San Moreno in years when I met him. He had simply been hanging around the campus to sell his drugs to the student body. And as for Greg, our supposed friendship had been based on nothing. Truth be told I got stuck with Greg because he had been the guy showing new students to their dorm rooms and I had made the mistake of chatting with him as he was escorting me, which in Greg world made us best pals even though we didn’t even have any classes in common nor interests for that matter. But, like it or not I was stuck with the two of them…Well at least while we are stuck in this so called Christian town.

“You want a refill?” I asked him trying to change the subject.

“How about a beer?” he asked holding up his glass, which still had the telling maraschino cherry with a toothpick speared through it. He handed me his sort of empty glass.

“A refill of Coke it is.” I said, sidling up to the bar. “Just remember you are on medications, young man.” I reminded him pointing at him with a falsetto stern look.

“Thanks bro.” he said with a touch of annoyance.

“Just doing my job, little brother.” I said giving him a warm smile. It was truly nice to have him back.

At that moment my Goth goddess came up to me. “What’s your pleasure, Stud.”

“My little brother will have another Coke.” I said, indicating Damon who was sitting to the side of the bar in his wheelchair giving me a dirty look, as I had cunningly planned. “And, I’ll have my usual.” I said, giving her a seductive smile.

“Whiskey with a beer chaser.” She said, rolling her eyes.

“You know me too well, Darling.” My smile widened.

Oh, I nearly forgot, it turned out that my favorite bartender ‘Amy’ was actually Fiona. She was in fact the actual owner of the bar. She had bought it from a jock guy named Alex who had had tried to turn the bar into a jock bar, failed, and wanted to free himself of it. Fiona had been working at the bar from a couple of years and liked the bars atmosphere. So she got it for a song and restored it to its original worn and classic look.

How did I get all this info? Well, about a week after Greg and his mom moved out I got a bit on the horny side and tried to hook up with her. To put it simply, in regard to Fiona, she had other ideas.

“Yes, I do Romeo.” She lifted her eyebrow at me. “But as I said I prefer the company of ladies. Dicks have no interest to me.”

“Such a waste.” I commented, giving her a look of defeat. It was a lie. For me hope always springs eternal, especially with the opposite sex. I would wear her down with my charm.

What can I say? Over the years doing this job my interest in women have turned a bit dark and alternate. Shit, the last girl I had sex with dressed up in a vinyl kinky red angel costume with wings for me. She was indeed a kinky one. Vernon had not been amused when he barged in on my fun that night and got an eye full. The Full Monty that is.

Fiona delivered our drinks and I handed Damon his Coke. Fiona had even given him a fresh cherry in this one. What a treat.

"Oh, Bro?" Damon asked after sipping his drink. "Why is that kid staring at me?"

I looked over and indeed Angus was staring with his dead eyes at poor Damon.

I was so happy that I felt like doing an Irish jig. The curse was over for me. The potential Anti-Christ had his eyes on a new victim and I was now free.

"Oh, he just likes you." I said, smiling at him. *Better you than me, Bro,* I thought.

"That is one fucking scary kid." He said.

Unfortunately, sitting at a table on the other side of the bar at the table just beyond the table Wayne's family occupied was Greg and his mom.

Greg saw me looking in his direction and waved at me. His mom immediately slapped his hand and started telling him off, though I couldn't hear a word that was said thanks to the music playing around the room.

I gather she was still a bit miffed about my participation in the incident that resulted in her losing her apartment, even though she was the one who initiated things. Though really I know there wouldn't have been a way to free Nobbie without ripping the floor open, which makes the matter mute in the end.

So, that was how the party went. At the end of the evening it actually took both Wayne and myself to get Damon and his wheelchair up the main staircase of the Imperial Palace. Amusingly we were so sloshed that we nearly dropped him twice down the stairs during our assent.

Then two weeks later a miracle happened when we went to see the doctor's for a checkup. Amazingly Damon's broken legs somehow completely healed. The doctor was totally stumped because he had expected at the very least another couple of month's for full recovery.

As for me and Damon we knew that this had had to be a bit of angelic intervention by a certain bald and bored angel. Though, Vernon would never admit to such a thing.

Well, if anything it came at the right time because right when we were in the middle of packing the van Carol finally made an appearance.

"You need to go to North Carolina. There is a family that has a serious demon infestation there." She told me.

I had to hide my excitement, but inside I was celebrating.

After Carol faded, I made Damon aware of the situation. We were on the lonely road and back in business within ninety minutes. At last we could say goodbye and good riddance to the town of Hope. Happy time! Demons beware!

If you know of a Pitbull in need, all these organizations can help…

The National Pitbull Non-Profit and Advocacy Organization

California Pitbull Rescue

Villalobos Rescue Center

A Rotta Love Plus

Brave Bully Rescue

Hopalong Animal Rescue

Karma rescue

BAD RAP

Houston SPCA

Pitbull Advocacy Group

SPCA Jefferson

Animal Farm Foundation

My Pit Bull is Family

Among many more… Please Help…

Afterword
Every Dog Gets His Day

Since 2017 I've been my sister's care giver. As part of our day during the week, after her soap operas we go to Animal Planet and watch the reality show Pitbulls and Parolees.

This show is about the Villalobos Rescue Center and the family that runs it. It shows how these wonderful people save Pitbulls that has been abandon on the streets of New Orleans. This show made me aware of the incredible abuse these dogs suffer at the hands of people. From dogs being left out in the blistering heat without water with heavy chains on their necks, dogs who survived floods, and survivors of people breeding and using them for dog fights. This show showed it all.

It was with this show in my head that my mind came up with the story of a dog that had been abused most of its life being brutally murdered and its spirit trapped in the scene of the crime until its murderer had to face what he had done. I wanted this dog to be a full character and not just a prop to be used. I wanted the reader to feel for Nobbie, who was named, somewhat, after my friend, Boo Rhoads' barky little dog, Navi.

I also wanted to make this a multitier morality tale, so I added the subplot about Devlin's brother getting assaulted by racists as well as Devlin's friend's mother and an incompetent priest misidentifying Nobbie's spirit as a demon and performing an unauthorized exorcism.

The Dog Day was originally supposed to be the second Devlin Darck short story to come out after the short story A Death in the Family. But, this story just seemed to grab my interest over the latter story and ended up getting done faster.

There are currently also three others stories in the works that are in different degrees of development. All the stories will take place in different eras of Devlin's time as a demon fighter, thus some will be about a young Devlin while others will be about an older and more jaded Devlin.

So, be ready for a very different experience in regard to continuity of these stories. I think you'll find this an interesting adventure…

Gore and Scares,

William Pattison

San Mateo, Californi

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Pattison is best known for his writing of the *Friday The Thirteenth: Camp Crystal Lake* Book Series, under the pen name of Eric Morse. He is also the author of the novels *The Traveler: A Conflict of Interest*, *Psychotic State: The Novel and The Symphony of Death anthology series of books*. He is also known for his screen-writing on the films *The Horror Seasons, Midnight Matinee Psycho*, and *Psychotic State.*

William was educated at Aragon High School in San Mateo, California. He also spent three years at the College of San Mateo, where he studied filmmaking. It was while he was at the College of San Mateo that he became interested in novel writing. Unfortunately, he did not qualify to attend the fiction writing class. So, William bought the text book for the class (THE CRAFT OF FICTION by William C. Knott) and taught himself how to write fiction....

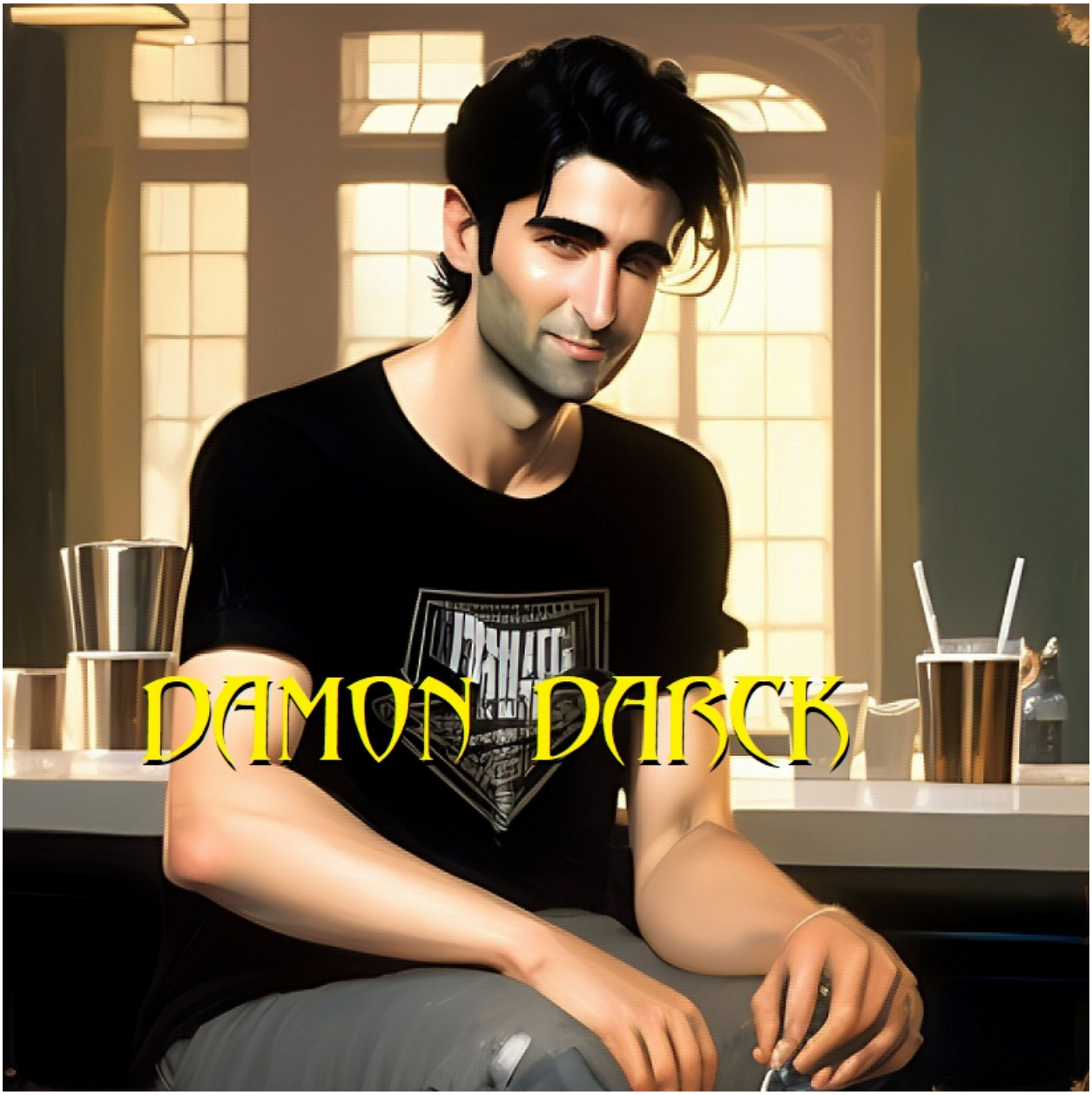
William is also an acknowledged portrait artist and poet. He won a silver cup and bronze award from the International Society of Poetry for one of his poems.

William lives with his sister in San Mateo, California.

Art Gallery

CAROL
DEVLIN'S SPIRIT GUIDE

VERNON
ANGEL OF THE LORD


DAMON DARCK

GREG TITERTON

GREG'S MOM
MRS TITERTON

FATHER BENJAMIN

HUGO RABBINOVSKI

GOTH BARTENDER

WAYNE

LITTLE ANGUS AND
HIS MOM, HOPE

NOBBIE THE GHOST DOG